

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/733,030  
Amendment filed November 10, 2004  
Reply to OA dated August 12, 2004

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Please cancel claims 2, 9 and 20 without prejudice or disclaimer, and amend claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15 and 19, as follows. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

**Claim 1 (Currently Amended):** A printing system comprising:

a print requester host; and

a single or a plurality of print requestee printers connected via a network to said host;

said host abstractly defining ~~an output port to an actual printer as said print requestee printer,~~

~~for printing~~ a port of a printer driver serving as an output path to an actual printer; and

when there occurs a print request to said port of the printer driver, said host automatically selects a specific printer for printing through sequential execution, between said host and said printer on said network, of a retrieval request from said host, a retrieval response from said printer, a print request from said host, and a response to said print request from said printer.

**Claim 2 (Canceled)**

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**Claim 3 (Currently Amended):** A printing system according to claim [[2]] 1, wherein  
upon occurrence of a print request on said host, said host sends a retrieval request packet to  
~~all printers~~ a plurality of printers on said network, wherein  
said printer that has received said retrieval request packet from said host, if enabled for print,  
sends a retrieval response packet to said host, wherein  
upon receipt of said retrieval response packet from said printer, said host selects as a  
requestee candidate a printer from which said host has first received a retrieval response, to send a  
print request packet to said requestee candidate printer, wherein  
said requestee candidate printer that has received said print request packet sends a validation  
response packet to a print request to said host, and wherein  
upon receipt of said validation response packet from said requestee candidate printer, said  
host determines said requestee candidate printer as a print requestee to execute print processing.

**Claim 4 (Currently Amended):** A printing system according to claim 1, wherein  
said printer that has received a retrieval request packet from said host sends a retrieval  
response packet to said host, said retrieval response packet containing communication information  
on said printer itself, wherein  
upon receipt of said retrieval response packet from said printer, said host sends a print request  
packet to ~~all printers~~ a plurality of printers on said network, said print request packet containing  
communication information on a printer selected, and wherein

upon receipt of said print request packet, said printer compares printer communication information contained in said print request packet with its own printer communication information, said printer if coincident recognizing that said printer itself has been selected, to send a validation response packet to said host.

**Claim 5 (Original):** A printing system according to claim 1, wherein  
said host displays information indicative of a printer selected on the basis of a printer response packet, on a user interface.

**Claim 6 (Currently Amended):** A printing system according to claim [[2]] 1, wherein  
said host makes a retrieval request to said printers on said network, said retrieval request containing unique printer specific information for specifying a printer, said host automatically selecting a specific printer that conforms with previously entered printer specific information, for printing.

**Claim 7 (Original):** A printing system according to claim 6, wherein  
said host sends a retrieval request packet to all printers on said network with unique printer specific information designated, wherein

upon receipt of said retrieval request packet from said host, said printer sends a retrieval response packet to said host providing that said printer is enabled for print and that said designated

unique printer specific information is coincident with its own printer specific information, wherein  
upon receipt of said retrieval response packet from said printer, said host when said received  
printer specific information coincides with said designated printer specific information sends a print  
request packet to said printer having coincident printer specific information, wherein  
a specific printer that has received said print request packet sends a validation response  
packet to a print request to said host, and wherein  
upon receipt of said validation response packet from said printer, said host determines said  
printer as a print requestee for print processing.

**Claim 8 (Currently Amended):** A printing method for performing a printing operation by  
selective use of a single or a plurality of printers connected via a network from a print requester host,  
said method comprising the step of:

abstractly defining ~~on said host an output port to an actual printer as a print requestee printer,~~  
~~to perform said printing operation~~ a port of a printer driver serving as an output path to an actual  
printer; and

when there occurs a print request to said port of the printer driver, causing said host and said  
printer on said network to automatically select a specific printer for printing through sequential  
execution, between said host and said printer on said network, of a retrieval request from said port,  
a retrieval response from said printer, a print request from said port, and a response to said print  
request from said printer.

**Claim 9 (Canceled)**

**Claim 10 (Currently amended):** A printing method according to claim 9, wherein  
upon occurrence of a print request on said host, a retrieval request packet is sent to ~~all~~  
~~printers~~ a plurality of printers on said network, wherein  
said printer that has received said retrieval request packet from said host, if enabled for print,  
sends a retrieval response packet to said host, wherein  
upon receipt of said retrieval response packet from said printer, said host selects as a  
requestee candidate a printer from which said host has first received a retrieval response, to send a  
print request packet to said requestee candidate printer, wherein  
said requestee candidate printer that has received said print request packet sends a validation  
response packet to a print request to said host, and wherein  
upon receipt of said validation response packet from said requestee candidate printer, said  
host determines said requestee candidate printer as a print requestee to execute print processing.

**Claim 11 (Currently Amended):** A printing method according to claim 8, wherein  
said printer that has received a retrieval request packet from said host sends a retrieval  
response packet to said host, said retrieval response packet containing communication information  
on said printer itself, wherein

upon receipt of said retrieval response packet from said printer, said host sends a print request packet to ~~all printers~~ a plurality of printers on said network, said print request packet containing communication information on a printer selected, and wherein

upon receipt of said print request packet, said printer compares printer communication information contained in said print request packet with said its own printer communication information, said printer if coincident recognizing that said printer itself has been selected, to send a validation response packet to said host.

**Claim 12 (Original):** A printing method according to claim 8, wherein

said host displays information indicative of a printer selected on the basis of a printer response packet, on a user interface.

**Claim 13 (Currently Amended):** A printing method according to claim ~~[[9]]~~ 8, further comprising the steps of:

making a retrieval request from said host to said printers on said network, said retrieval request containing unique printer specific information for specifying a printer; and

automatically selecting a specific printer that conforms with previously entered printer specific information, to perform said printing operation.

**Claim 14 (Currently amended):** A printing method according to claim 13, wherein  
said host sends a retrieval request packet to ~~all printers~~ a plurality of printers on said network  
with unique printer specific information designated, wherein

upon receipt of said retrieval request packet from said host, said printer sends a retrieval  
response packet to said host providing that said printer is enabled for print and that said designated  
unique printer specific information is coincident with its own printer specific information, wherein

upon receipt of said retrieval response packet from said printer, said host when said received  
printer specific information coincides with said designated printer specific information sends a print  
request packet to said printer having coincident printer specific information, wherein

a specific printer that has received said print request packet sends a validation response  
packet to a print request to said host, wherein

upon receipt of said validation response packet from said printer, said host determines said  
printer as a print requestee to execute print processing.

**Claim 15 (Currently Amended):** A print requester apparatus for performing a printing  
operation by selective use of any one of a plurality of printers connected via a network, said  
apparatus comprising:

an output port of a printer driver that is abstractly defined as an output path to an actual  
printer ~~when a print request takes place~~; and

a printer retrieval unit which, ~~upon abstract definition of said output port~~ when there occurs

a print request to said port of the printer driver, automatically selects a specific printer for printing through sequential execution, between said printer retrieval unit and said printer on said network, of a retrieval request from said host, a retrieval response from said printer, a print request from said host, and a response to said print request from said printer.

**Claim 16 (Original):** A print requester apparatus according to claim 15, wherein upon occurrence of a print request, said printer retrieval unit sends a retrieval request packet to ~~all printers~~ a plurality of printers on said network, wherein upon receipt of a retrieval response packet from a print enabled printer, said printer retrieval unit selects as a requestee candidate a printer from which said printer retrieval unit has first received a retrieval response, to send a print request packet to said requestee candidate printer; upon receipt from said requestee candidate printer of a validation response packet to said print request packet, said printer retrieval unit determines said requestee candidate printer as a print requestee to execute print processing.

**Claim 17 (Original):** A print requester apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said printer retrieval unit displays information indicative of a printer selected on the basis of a printer response packet, on a user interface.



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**Claim 18 (Original):** A print requester apparatus according to claim 15, wherein  
said printer retrieval unit makes a retrieval request to said printers on said network, said  
retrieval request containing unique printer specific information for specifying a printer, said printer  
retrieval unit automatically selecting a specific printer that conforms with previously entered printer  
specific information, to perform a printing operation.

**Claim 19 (Currently Amended):** A printer connected via a network to a print requester  
host, said printer comprising:

a retrieval response unit for allowing itself to be selected as a print requestee through a  
sequential execution of a retrieval response to a retrieval request from said host and a response to  
a print request from said host;

said retrieval response unit transmitting a retrieval response packet if printable upon receiving  
a retrieval request packet from the host; and then,

upon receipt of a print request packet from the host, transmitting a confirmation response  
packet to the print request to cause the print requester to decide the same on the host side.

**Claim 20 (Canceled)**